OTTAWA ONLINE
BUS-8500 Graduate Seminar: Business Policies and Strategies

Course Description
Capstone course in which participants develop a major case study of business administration issues, programs and policies in a current organization. Draws from and utilizes concepts, theories and skills developed in previous courses.

This is a fully online, eight-week course. We will not meet face-to-face at any time.

Course Prerequisites
Prerequisite: Completion of all core courses in the MBA program or approval of advisor.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Apply the key elements of effective case analysis.
2. Analyze stakeholder needs and create effective mission statements.
3. Effectively utilize the strategic tools for internal and external environmental analyses.
4. Analyze organizational structures and develop alternative recommendations.
5. Analyze the sources of cost- and differentiation-based competitive advantage.
6. Interpret and recommend strategic actions based on industry life-cycles.
7. Interpret and recommend organizational strategies at the functional, business, corporate and global levels.
8. Discuss and gain sensitivity to ethical issues in strategy making.
9. Exercise the ability to think holistically and integrate the concepts and tools of strategic management to create realistic strategic recommendations.

Required Text

ISBN: 9780470747094

Course Assignment Descriptions
You will have several opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the principles taught in this course. The primary means of evaluating your work will be through practical application of the material. In the event that you have difficulty completing any of the assignments for this course, please contact your instructor immediately. Please refer to the Weekly Materials section of the cyberclassroom for
complete details regarding the activities and assignments for this course. The following is merely a summary.

**Discussion contributions (160 points)**
(six postings per week @ 20 points per week)

**Initial Substantive Posts**: Submit an initial response to each of the prompts provided each week by your instructor. Your initial post should be substantive (approximately ½ of a page in length) and must be posted by midnight, Central Time by Wednesday of each week. In your substantive post you are encouraged to use references (you may use your textbook); show evidence of critical thinking as it applies to the concepts or prompt and/or use examples of the application of the concepts to work and life. Proper punctuation, grammar and correct spelling are expected. Please use the spell-check function.

**Required Replies**: You must reply to at least two different peers per prompt. Your replies should build on the concept discussed, offer a question to consider, or add a differing perspective, etc. Rather than responding with, "Good post," explain why the post is "good" (why it is important, useful, insightful, etc.). Or, if you disagree, respectfully share your alternative perspective. Just saying "I agree" or "Good idea" is not sufficient for the posts you would like graded.

**Posting Guidelines**: Overall, postings must be submitted on at least two separate days of the week. It is strongly recommended you visit the discussion forum throughout the week to read and respond to your peers’ postings. You are encouraged to post more than the required number of replies.

(Please review the Policies section of Blackboard for further details.)

**Week 1: Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (30 points)**
Read the case "Robin Hood" provided in the Week 1 lesson, and complete the following corresponding assignment.

Before Robin can develop a strong, coherent strategy, he must have a solid mission statement; one that provides guidance and motivation for his band of Merrypersons. Your charge is to act as Robin's strategic planning consultant and complete the first step of the strategic planning process…the mission statement. Remember that mission statements have four components: mission, vision, values, and goals (MVVG).

Please prepare a short paper (no more than 2 pages) detailing Robin's new mission statement.

**Week 2: Case Analysis: The US Airline Industry in 2009 (40 points)**
Perform a brief case analysis of "The US Airline Industry in 2009" case using Wertheim's Case Analysis and Problem Solving Model. For this assignment, do only steps 2 & 3 (Define the problem; Causes). After reading the case, use Wertheim's Model to define the major problem and then use Porter's Five Forces analysis to outline the causes of the problem. This short paper should be no more than three pages.
Week 3: Organizational Resource Analysis (50 points)
Read the case: "Eastman Kodak: Meeting the Digital Challenge" from your text. Conduct a strategic analysis using Wertheim's structure. In the causes section, be sure to use a tool to appraise strategic resources and capabilities such as the example provided in Table 5.4 of the text. Provide alternative solutions to the case problem and choose one or two that you think best address the issues of Kodak.

This, more detailed, case analysis, should be 5-7 pages in length and should be fully referenced for any outside information you apply to the case. (Tip:) Write the case analysis as if you were hired as a consultant to provide strategic recommendations.

Week 4: Business Level Strategy Analysis (30 points)
Write a brief assessment (two pages) of the WalMart case found in the text. Address three questions based on WalMart's business level strategy:

- What drivers of cost advantage make WalMart such a successful organization in the world of low-cost leadership?
- What types of problems evolve when low-cost leadership becomes the sole focus of organizations?
- Do you see any indications that WalMart is changing the way it pursues low-cost leadership?

You are not required to use outside resources for this assignment. If you choose to use any resources besides your text, you will need to include citations and references in APA format, but if you choose to use just what you have learned from your text readings from Week 4 in response to the case, you will not need to include those references.

Week 5: Case Analysis: Raisio Group and the Benecol Launch (30 points)
Write a brief, 2-3 page paper about Raisio and the Benecol Launch. In this paper, address the following questions concerning Raisio's strategy in launching the new product, Benecol:

- What is Raisio's initial strategy for launching Benecol?
- What are the risks associated with the partnership with Johnson & Johnson?
- What strategy do you think they should employ after the dissolution of the J&J partnership (your recommendations)?

You are not required to use outside resources for this assignment. If you choose to use any resources besides your text, you will need to include citations and references in APA format, but if you choose to use just what you have learned from your text readings this week in response to the case, you will not need to include those references.

Week 6: Analysis of Corporate Strategies (50 points)
Write a formal case analysis (5-7 pages) of the "Richard Branson and the Virgin Group of Companies in 2007." Use Wertheim's structure for case analysis. Pay particular attention to the choices of corporate strategy when outlining the causes of any problems.
identified. Identify creative recommendations for Richard Branson (a very creative person).

This more detailed case analysis requires the use of outside resources. Include in-text citations and references in APA format for at least two sources, not including the case itself. Please also, include a title page in APA format.

**Week 7: International Strategy Analysis (30 points)**

Write a brief assessment (two pages) of the Outback Steakhouse case found in the text. Pay particular attention to the following questions:

- What are the basic elements of Outback's plan for going international?
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this plan?
- What changes to the plan would you recommend to Connerty?
- Given what you know from the case, do you think Outback should try the international journey?

You are not required to use outside resources for this assignment. If you choose to use any resources besides your text, you will need to include citations and references in APA format, but if you choose to use just what you have learned from your text readings this week in response to the case, you will not need to include those references.

**Week 8: Strategy Project (200 points)**

Select either a publicly-held corporation or a private company (where the financial data is accessible) that is facing interesting strategic issues. The use of a publicly-held firm rather than one that is closely-held may be important to ensure adequate access to important corporate information such as financial statements. I highly recommend that you select organizations where your efforts will make a difference - firms you work for or firms that need a strategic analysis performed. (Disney may be an interesting company to analyze, but I doubt that they'll look at your work.) You will then develop a detailed written analysis. A project guideline will be provided for you in the Week 8 lesson in Blackboard. This guideline should be viewed as the firm's strategic balance sheet. Fundamentally, the project allows you to use both the art and science of strategic management by developing your research skills in competitive analysis, applying the strategic tools learned in class, and using your imagination and judgment to formulate the recommendations and implementation plan.

The written analysis should be approximately 25 pages, double-spaced, not including exhibits. The paper should describe and evaluate the firm's current position and include an analysis of the relevant industry issues. It should conclude with recommendations for both future strategy and implementation. The paper should be fully referenced with citations in the body of the paper and with a complete reference list of sources in APA format.

**Week 8: MBA Program Assessment (30 points)**

Each student is required to submit artifacts (signature assignments) from each of their core courses as part of the capstone course. Upload at least one assignment from each of your MBA program core courses as part of this program assessment. Since you will
have several files to submit, creating a zip file will be the easiest way to submit all of these files to Blackboard as your portfolio. Review these instructions to create a zip file (a) on a PC, and (b) on a Mac. Then, when you submit this assignment, you will submit both the zipped folder and the essay document (described below).

This Blackboard portfolio should also include a short essay (no more than three pages) on your assessment of the learning outcomes for Graduate Programs and the MBA program. Specifically, you should discuss whether you feel that the course of instruction has prepared you for the next step in your career through assessment of the learning outcomes. Use the Student Learning Outcomes Program Assessment document provided in the Week 8 lesson to assist you with this assignment. Use this document to evaluate how well you believe you have met each of the following Learning Outcomes using the following 1-5 scale. In your essay, provide a rationale for these evaluations/scores, and refer to the assignments you have submitted as artifacts from each course in demonstrating how well you have achieved each outcome.

Consider the graduate program and MBA program outcomes below as you complete your program assessment.

**Graduate Program-Wide**

**Cognitive Development:**

1. Analyze, integrate, and apply theories, research, and techniques to plan and serve effectively within one’s professional field of study.

2. Acquire knowledge of laws, ethics, and values and apply this knowledge to make decisions appropriate to one's professional practice.

3. Communicate effectively as professionals.

**Affective Development:**

4. Demonstrate an understanding of the value of continued personal and professional development.

5. Model Ottawa University values and culture by practicing mutual respect, encouragement, and support within and beyond the learning community.

**MBA Program**

1. Appraise ethical situations, questions, and issues and select best practices for ethical business decision-making.

2. Analyze strategic opportunities and integrate marketing principles in marketing plan development and implementation.

3. Integrate theories and principles of human behavior and leadership to improve individual and organizational performance.
4. Integrate economic theories and principles into business analyses and managerial decision-making.
5. Develop accounting information for effective planning, control, and decision-making.
6. Analyze financial data and integrate theories and tools used in financial decision-making.
7. Evaluate the efficacy of information systems and communication technologies that support business functions.
8. Analyze the forces within the operating environment of business organizations and assess the impact of those forces on operations and strategy.
9. Create comprehensive business strategies and envision potential futures that integrate organizational functions in achieving sustainable competitive advantage.
10. Develop and measure the impact of HR management systems and processes to issues of staffing, effectiveness, performance, assessment, diversity, and organizational change.
11. Design, plan, execute and evaluate communication methodologies at organizational, team, and individual levels.
12. Cultivate and manage personal and professional relationships and resources. Build upon these resources to accomplish organizational goals.
13. Develop key research questions, access relevant information, evaluate information and its sources critically, and synthesize and apply that information.
14. Assess the value of continued learning and propose a plan for personal and professional development.

**Course Schedule At-A-Glance***

Please refer to the Term Calendar in our cyberclassroom for specifics regarding dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
<th>Date/Time Due**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | • Chapter 1: The Concept of Strategy  
• Chapter 2: Goals, Values, and Performance | • Course Discussion  
• Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals | • Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.  
• Sunday at midnight |
| Week 2 | • Chapter 3: Industry Analysis: The Fundamentals  
• Chapter 4: Further Topics in Industry and Competitive Analysis  
• Case: The US Airline Industry in 2009 | • Course Discussion  
• Case Analysis: The US Airline Industry in 2009 | • Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.  
• Sunday at midnight |
| Week 3 | • Chapter 5: Analyzing Resources and Capabilities  
• Chapter 6: Developing Resources and Capabilities  
• Case: Eastman Kodak: Meeting the Digital Challenge | • Course Discussion  
• Organizational Resource Analysis | • Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.  
• Sunday at midnight |
| Week 4 | • Chapter 8: The Nature and Sources of Competitive Advantage  
• Chapter 9: Cost Advantage | • Course Discussion  
• Business Level Strategy Analysis | • Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.  
• Sunday at midnight |
- Chapter 10: Differentiation Advantage
- Case: WalMart Stores, Inc. 2009

Week 5
- Chapter 11: Industry Evolution and Strategic Change
- Chapter 12: Technology-based Industries and the Management of Innovation
- Chapter 13: Competitive Advantage in Mature Industries
- Case: Raisio Group and the Benecol Launch
- Course Discussion
- Case Analysis: Raisio Group and the Benecol Launch
- Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.
- Sunday at midnight

Week 6
- Chapter 14: Vertical Integration and the Scope of the Firm
- Chapter 16: Diversification Strategy
- Case: Richard Branson and the Virgin Group of Companies in 2007
- Course Discussion
- Analysis of Corporate Strategies
- Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.
- Sunday at midnight

Week 7
- Chapter 15: Global Strategies and the Multinational Corporation
- Case: Outback Steakhouse: Going International
- Course Discussion
- International Strategy Analysis
- Midnight CT on Weds/Sun.
- Sunday at midnight

Week 8
- No additional readings
- Course Discussion
- Strategy Paper
- MBA Program Assessment
- Midnight CT on Weds/Sat.
- Saturday at midnight

* All online weeks run from Monday to Sunday, except the last week, which ends on Saturday.
** All assignments are due at midnight Central Time. (All submissions to the Blackboard system are date/time stamped in Central Time).

Assignments At-A-Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Activity</th>
<th>Qty.</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 1-8: Discussion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 per week</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2: Case Analysis: The US Airline Industry in 2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3: Organizational Resource Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4: Business Level Strategy Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5: Case Analysis: Raisio Group and the Benecol Launch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6: Analysis of Corporate Strategies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7: International Strategy Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8: Strategy Project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8: MBA Program Assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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</table>
TOTAL POINTS 650

*Please refer to the Policies menu for more information about our Course Discussions.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 to 100%</td>
<td>585-650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 to 89%</td>
<td>520-584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 to 79%</td>
<td>455-519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 to 69%</td>
<td>390-454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
<td>&lt; 390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To access your scores, click on Grades in the Student Tools area in Blackboard.

Important Policies

All course-specific policies for this course are spelled out here in this syllabus. However, additional university policies are located in the Policies section of Blackboard. You are responsible for reading and understanding all of these policies. All of them are important. Failure to understand or abide by them could have negative consequences for your experience in this course.

Editorial Format for Written Papers

All written assignments are to follow the APA writing style guidelines for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This online course includes information regarding the APA style under “Writing and Research Resources” in the Resource Room on the course menu in Blackboard.

Ottawa Online Late Policy

With instructor approval, assignments may be accepted for up to one week after the due date, but a minimum automatic deduction of 10% of the points will be assessed. The instructor also has the option of increasing this deduction percentage up to a maximum of 20%. Extenuating circumstances may be determined on rare occasions and an extension allowed without a deduction, but only at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Discussion board postings will not be accepted for credit when posted after the close of the discussion week. There are no exceptions to this rule; however, solely at the discretion of the instructor, the student may be allowed to submit an alternative assignment to make up for the points under extenuating circumstances. If granted, this should be an exception to the rule.

No assignments will be accepted after the last day of the course (end of term) unless arrangements have been made and “approved” by the instructor at least one week in advance.

Saving Work

It is recommended that you save all of your work from this course on your own computer or flash drive. The capstone course you take at the end of your program may require you to have access to this work for culminating assignments and/or reflections.

Program Completion Survey
This graduate capstone course/experience provides you the opportunity to complete the Program Completion Survey to evaluate your entire Ottawa University experience – the academic program, advisement, student services, and learning environment. While your participation is voluntary, you are encouraged to take a few minutes to complete the survey. Your responses provide the university invaluable information which guide the university in making changes to improve the student experience.

At the beginning of the sixth week of this course, you will receive an email from the Ottawa University Office of Institutional Effectiveness (ou.assessment@ottawa.edu) via your Ottawa University student email address. This email will include a link for you to complete the Program Completion Survey online. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Your responses to the survey will remain confidential and your individual responses will not be tracked in any way.

You are requested to complete the survey before the end of week 6 of the course. If you do not respond within the allotted time frame, you will receive a reminder prior to the closure of the course. The grade book in Blackboard will be updated with a green checkmark for this item once your completed survey has been received by the survey software. Thank you for helping us validate and strengthen the student experience at Ottawa University.

**Academic Integrity**
Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level on any assignment. The reality of cyberspace has made academic dishonesty even more tempting for some, but be advised that technology can and will be used to help uncover those engaging in deception. If you ever have a question about the legitimacy of a source or a procedure you are considering using, ask your instructor. As the University Academic Council approved on May 29, 2003, “The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred. Students who commit academic dishonesty can be dismissed from the university by the provost/director.”

Please refer to **Academic Honesty** in the **Policies** section of the online course menu for important information about Ottawa University’s policies regarding plagiarism and cheating, including examples and explanations of these issues.

**Student Handbook**
Please refer to your student handbook for all university regulations. The **Resource Room** on the course menu in Blackboard contains information about where to find the student handbook online for your campus.

Please see **Policies** in Blackboard for additional university policies.

**Blackboard Technical Support**
The Resource Room in Blackboard contains links to student tutorials for learning to use Blackboard as well as information about whom to contact for technical support. Ottawa University offers technical support from 8 a.m. to midnight Central Time for all students, staff, and faculty at no cost. See [www.ottawa.edu/ouhelp](http://www.ottawa.edu/ouhelp) for contact information.
Ottawa University Mission Statement
The mission of Ottawa University is to provide the highest quality liberal arts and professional education in a caring, Christ-centered community of grace which integrates faith, learning and life. The University serves students of traditional age, adult learners and organizations through undergraduate and graduate programs.